

Druids & Druidism

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Designer

Thomas Knuss

Artwork

Kevin Yincey

Editor

Jamie McGrath

Cover

Kevin Yincey

Creative Director

Jim Butler

Typesetter

John Gray

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Introduction

Since the dawn of creation, sentient beings have waged an endless struggle for survival against nature's awesome fury. Whether seeking shelter from a violent storm or fleeing the virulent eruption of a furious volcano, civilization reminds us the pathetic mercy of its surroundings. Although many live in fear of nature's terrible wrath, a small circle of individuals embraces its mysterious and wondrous powers. Rejecting the tenets of urban society, these intrepid individuals commune with the natural world forming a sacred pact between themselves and the land itself. In an unusual symbiotic relationship, druids swear their indomitable allegiance to nature in exchange for union with its inhabitants and divine magic.

Contrary to many popular fictions, druids are not passive, anti-social vegetarians accompanied by scores of adoring animals and indulging in the inhalation of hallucinogenic herbs and leaves. While some of these perceptions undoubtedly possess a least a modicum of truth, the notion is entirely skewed. Druids are fervent in their defense of their sacred wilderness, more than willing to physically combat any unwelcome interloper. Most druids lead a more solitary lifestyle than sedentary populations, yet druids enjoy the company of their animal companions and fellow druids. Despite the absence of throngs of nearby humnoids, druids experience far less alienation and loneliness than urban residents immersed in a sea of humanity. Although druids genuinely befriend their animal companions, they continue to hunt other animals for food and byproducts such as leather and bone. Finally, while druids harvest numerous plants for a myriad of medicinal and alchemical purposes, they respect and fear their potentially dangerous and addictive properties. Druids refrain from indulging in their usage solely for personal pleasure or escape from reality. Instead, druids are a close-knit brotherhood devoted to the sanctimonious preservation of the wilderness and the perpetuation of the natural order.

Despite their close interaction with the natural world, druids maintain an semblance of neutrality in accordance with nature's grand design. Nature herself is a passive observer, abstaining from interfering in the affairs of sentient beings regardless of the consequences. To druids, nature is an intangible living entity, the mother and the wellspring of all life and creation. Present before the inception of deities and the discovery of arcane magic, nature remains timeless and omnipotent, impervious to the machinations of foolish beings attempting to supersede or dominate its limitless power. Nature is more than a pristine forest or an imposing mountain; it is the physical manifestation of a celestial master plan invoked to

govern the orderly function of the universe and all living things. Time, space, life and death acquiesce to its laws and rules, however notable exceptions exist. The blight of the living dead, the power to bend space by traveling great distances and the ability to stop time all defy nature's intentions. While such transgressions are usually transitory and localized, druids undertake the reparation of the natural world as their sacred duty.

Fortunately, most challenges to the natural order remain more mundane, but no less real. Civilization continues to expand at an alarming rate, threatening the sanctity and ecological viability of vast tracts of primordial wilderness. Savage tribes of voracious monsters and humnoids pillage the earth, ransacking its bountiful resources and disrupting its delicately balanced ecosystem. nefarious wizards and clerics seek refuge in its remote solitude to practice their insidious and destructive magic. The proliferation of undead creatures defiantly mocks the cycle of life, providing an existence beyond the limitations imposed by nature herself. Despite the perils and obstacles, druids persevere and battle against these unnatural forces in an effort to restore nature's harmonious balance. With the assistance of their animal and plant allies, druids wage a tireless campaign against these and other malevolent forces bent on the shameless exploitation of the natural world and its inhabitants.

As a result of these pervasive forces, Druids and Druidism provides numerous powers and abilities to combat these formidable adversaries. An eclectic collection of divine spells and magic items supplements the druid's extensive magical arsenal. Through their unique affinity with the natural world, druids harness raw magical energy as a means of mimicking, controlling and summoning nature's awesome power. Magic enables them to adopt the physiological features of their animal companions including the compound vision of an insect or the bird's use of sonar. They manipulate the powerful current of a raging river or the torrential downpour of a violent thunderstorm. When confronted by hordes of their enemies, druids instinctively mobilize legions of animals and plants to their defense.

Druids utilize numerous natural materials to forge an unprecedented quantity of weapons, armors, rings and miscellaneous items. Their array of wooden and bone weapons are more than a match for any steel or iron counterpart, while expertly crafted and tailored suits of leather and hide armor provide ample protection against their enemies' blows. Staffs frequently complement their impressive spellcasting abilities, while rings often increase their mastery over the natural world. Additionally, druids also manufacture a diverse variety of other magic items including saddles, crowns, masks and belts.

However, magic is not the only tool of the druid's disposal. Their extensive knowledge of the natural world allows them to concoct wondrous elixirs from native plants as well as coax poison from venomous animals. Countless hours of trial and error as well as painstaking research enable druids to augment their inherent abilities by mastering incredible feats of physical and intellectual prowess. Some druids follow this path of self-discovery to previously unattainable heights, specializing in the manipulation and control of their unique environment or climate.

Druids also depend on the capable assistance of other sentient beings. Dedicated contingents of loyal animal companions, ready to catch their moment's notice, accompany them throughout their travels. More importantly, they rely on their fellow druids for spiritual, moral, military and economic support by forming a unique druidic society known as a circle. This supplement describes the establishment, leadership and daily activities of this important facet in the druids' life.

Part inquisitive student, part steadfast defender and part diplomatic liaison, druids occupy a vital niche in the ecosystem. While staunchly protecting the unalienable rights of the natural world and its inhabitants, druids frequently find themselves at the center of an endless conflict between preservation and progress. By tenaciously adhering to their principles and ideals, druids maintain nature's integrity and strengthen their communion with the natural world utilizing whatever means necessary.

Prestige Druids

Molded by years of experience and spurred by force of will, some druids pursue a way of life vastly different from their counterparts. Although they maintain their core abilities and affinity for nature, these characters embody specific traits and powers attainable only through specialization in a particular field. Some develop an affinity with a specific species of animal, while others devote themselves to a particular climate or terrain. Druids that follow these paths achieve a synergy with nature that remains completely alien to their traditional counterparts. Regardless of their occasionally divergent ideologies, these individuals remain integral parts of the druid community.

Glacier Walker

Fierce, icy winds and bitter, numbing cold constantly accompany the resilient druids of the arctic regions. Swathed in bundles of thick fur and animal hide, the enigmatic glacier walker roams his wintry landscape, revering its wondrous marvels and incomparable beauty. Nearly all glacier walkers spend countless hours enhancing the aesthetic wonder of their territory by creating magnificent ice sculptures and totems of native animals. However, these mysterious artistic creations also serve several more practical purposes. They remind hunters and trappers to respect the sanctity of the frozen wilderness as well as warn poachers against plying their unsavory business in the druid's sacred land. Ice sculptures also function as means of communication between fellow druids in the area. They alert other druids to the presence of a specific animal in the immediate vicinity and mark the boundaries of the druid's territory. Although seemingly territorial in nature, glacier walkers are actually very cooperative and primarily sedentary. A typical circle of glacier walkers consists of anywhere between ten and twenty individuals with an elder druid serving as the group's undisputed leader. The circle always gathers in a secluded cavern within a ring of ice totems and sculptures.

Because of their harsh and brutal environment, glacier walkers engage in very little contact with the civilized world. Glacier walkers consciously avoid towns and cities, preferring to remain ignorant about the virtues and vices of urban life. However, they frequently interact with barbaric tribes in the region, trading a variety of commodities with the nomadic inhabitants of their territories. The two groups generally coexist peacefully, not surprising fact considering that most glacier walkers begin their lives as members of a barbaric tribe.





Humans are the most prevalent race among glacier walkers with half-orcs a distant second. Because of the inherent discipline essential for survival in this extreme climate, most glacier walkers are lawfully neutral. Glacier walkers revere and cherish the inimical inhabitants of their frozen territory, however wolves, lynxes, and polar bears are their most popular inimical companions. On the other hand, frost giants and white dragons remain their most bitter enemies. Regardless of the circumstances, glacier walkers attack these evil beings on sight.

Hit die: d8

Requirements

To qualify as a glacier walker, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Base Fortitude Bonus: +4

Alignment: Any non-chaotic

Skills: Animal Empathy 5 ranks, Craft (sculpture) 4 ranks, Handle Animal 5 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks, Wilderness Lore 4 ranks.

Feats: Great Fortitude

Class Skills

The glacier walker's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Animal Empathy (Cha), Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (any) (Int), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Glacier walkers gain no weapon or armor proficiencies.

Spells: Glacier walkers continue to receive new spells as if they acquired another level in the spellcasting class that they belonged to prior to becoming a glacier walker. However, they do not attain any other abilities gained from a level increase from the spellcasting class. If the character had more than one spellcasting class, the player decides which spellcasting class receives the additional level for purposes of determining his spells per day and spells known. Furthermore, whenever a glacier walker casts a spell inflicting cold damage, the spell deals an additional point of damage equal to the character's glacier walker level.

Arctic Movement (Ex): Whenever the glacier walker travels through arctic terrain, his movement rate increases by ten feet per round. In addition, magical cold effects that impede movement such as the spell *sleet storm* do not affect glacier walkers. To receive the benefits of this ability, the glacier walker must be moving by means of his own locomotion (i.e. a glacier walker riding a horse does not receive this benefit). Furthermore, whenever a glacier walker engages in melee with an opponent in arctic terrain, he receives the Improved Trip feat regardless of whether the character possesses the feat's prerequisites.

Cold Resistance (Ex): A glacier walker does not suffer any ill effects from cold weather and must make Fortitude checks every hour rather than every ten minutes when subjected to extreme cold. The results of failed checks remain unchanged. Glacier walkers also receive a +2 competence bonus to all saving throws against cold related effects such as a white dragon's breath weapon or *cone of cold*.

Table 1.0: Glacier Walker

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	+0	+2	+0	+0	Spells, Cold Resistance, Arctic Movement
2 nd	+1	+3	+0	+0	Winter's Enemies
3 rd	+2	+3	+1	+1	
4 th	+3	+4	+1	+1	Chill Metal
5 th	+3	+4	+1	+1	
6 th	+4	+5	+2	+2	Sleet Storm
7 th	+5	+5	+2	+2	
8 th	+6	+6	+2	+2	Ice Storm
9 th	+6	+6	+3	+3	
10 th	+7	+7	+3	+3	Frozen Prison



Winter's Enemies (Ex): Glacial walkers receive +4 dodge bonus against frost giants and white dragons as well as +1 competence bonus to attack rolls against frost giants and white dragons. These bonuses represent specific techniques and battle tactics shared among members of the druidic circle. As always, if a glacial walker loses his positive Dexterity bonus to armor class, he also loses his dodge bonus.

Chill Met (Sp): Once per day, a glacial walker may produce an effect identical to that of the *chill met* spell cast by a druid of his glacial walker level.

Sleet Storm (Sp): Once per day, a glacial walker may produce an effect identical to that of the *sleet storm* spell cast by a druid of his glacial walker level.

Ice Storm (Sp): Once per day, a glacial walker may produce an effect identical to that of the *ice storm* spell cast by a druid of his glacial walker level.

Frozen Prison (Sp): Once per day, a glacial walker may sculpt a magical frozen prison capable of capturing an opponent up to one size category larger than himself. Using his Craft (sculpture) skill, he carves an ice sculpture of spherical shape. Completing the shape takes ten minutes, at which time the glacial walker rolls a Craft (sculpture) check. (He cannot take "10" or "20" on this check.) The modified skill check determines the saving throw's difficulty class. For

instance, if the glacial walker has a modified Craft (sculpture) skill check of +9 and rolls a "12", the difficulty class of the saving throw is 21. Once finished, the sculpture retains its magical properties for twenty-four hours regardless of the temperature; however a glacial walker may not possess more than one frozen prison at any time. The glacial walker may hurl the icy prison at any target within 50 feet, treating the attack as ranged touch attack. A successful hit deals 5d6 points of cold damage with no saving throw allowed. Furthermore, the sculpture's frigid bars encapsulate the victim unless he rolls a successful Fortitude save. Failure completely immobilizes the victim for a number of rounds equal to the difficulty class of the saving throw. Success magically slows the victim for an equal number of rounds. Note that victims immune to cold damage are not immune to the spell-like ability's second effect.

Guardian of the Oasis

Punishing heat and whirling sand pummel the weathered countenance of the nomadic guardians of the oasis. To beleaguered desert travelers, the elusive glimpse of these reclusive figures is greeted with unbridled jubilation and delight, because a refreshing spring of crystal clear water must be close at hand. On the other hand, wary and suspicious travelers view the mysterious nomads of the sand in a completely different light. Their well-known affiliation with the native serpents and scorpions reinforces the unfounded belief that these bastions of the dunes conspire with the forces of treachery and evil. Regardless of their personal prejudices and convictions, even their staunchest enemies grudgingly admire the hardy defenders of the desert.

Guardians of the oasis dwell within an environment largely alien to most other humanoid races. While most desert civilizations flourish near life giving rivers and lakes, the guardians wander the remote recesses of its sandy dunes; steadfastly protecting its nourishing springs from harm. Primarily devoid of any societal structure or political hierarchy, guardians often demonstrate an obstinate and fiercely independent personality. Despite their lack of formal druidic society, guardians pledge nominal fealty to a loosely affiliated council of elder druids charged with the defense of a particular oasis. Most lead solitary lives, although immediate threats to a sacred site attract the attention of their fellow guardians. Guardians carefully monitor the activities of passing travelers and caravans, conducting active surveillance to ensure that they do not exploit the precious resources of the desert's scarce oases. Some desert travelers perceive the guardians' wary attitude toward strangers as covetous and selfish, but

